



City of Davis

Utility Rate Advisory Commission Minutes

Community Chambers Conference Room, 23 Russell Boulevard, Davis CA 95616

Wednesday, August 15, 2018

6:30 P.M.

Commissioner Members Present: Gerry Braun (Chair), Olof Bystrom, Jacques Franco, Richard McCann, Elaine Roberts-Musser, Johannes Troost

Absent: Lorenzo Kristov

Staff Present: Stan Gryczko, Assistant Public Works Director

Additional Attending: Adrienne Heinig, Administrative Analyst

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Braun at 6:29pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

Prior to the approval of the agenda, the commission received an update on the delays with the Solid Waste Rate study, specifically delays in obtaining actual cost data from Recology, and discussed whether or not in the absence of an update on the study the commission should hear Item C on the agenda. After the discussion, O Bystrom moved to approve the agenda as written, seconded by J Troost. The motion passed as follows:

Ayes: Braun, Bystrom, Franco, McCann, Roberts-Musser, Troost

Noes:

Absent: Kristov

3. Brief Announcements from Staff, Commission Members, and City Council Members

- O Bystrom discussed a recent social media post on the Nextdoor platform on the Loose in the Street (LITS) yard material pile collection program.
- E Roberts-Musser updated the Commission on the activities of the subcommittee on Enterprise Fund Reserve Policies, and requested the following information from staff:
 - Most recent balance sheet with assets and liabilities for all utilities, and if possible balance sheets back to FY 2008, and balance sheets of the Woodland-Davis Clean Water Agency JPA
 - Actual historic capital expenditures back to FY 2008
 - Bond covenants with coverage requirements
 - Question - are debt service payments imbedded in a line item already provided in the revenue/expenditure sheets?

- R McCann stated that the Enterprise Fund Reserve Policy subcommittee would provide a flow of analysis report by the next meeting. In response to a question on timing, E Roberts-Musser stated that the first phase of work from the subcommittee would be presented in the fall.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Consent Calendar

A. URAC Draft Meeting Minutes - July 18, 2018

E Roberts-Musser moved to approve the consent calendar. The motion was seconded by R McCann, and passed as follows:

Ayes: Braun, Bystrom, Franco, McCann, Roberts-Musser, Troost

Noes:

Absent: Kristov

During the item, the Commission held a brief discussion on the Organics Processing Feasibility Study timing, and reiterated the importance of including estimated dollar value impacts to individual customers for rate increases with the percentages in future rate study presentations.

6. Regular Items

A. Discussion of Topics and Plan for Joint Meeting with City Council.

G Braun introduced the item, to develop a plan for the upcoming conversation with the City Council. S Gryczko indicated that the current Council long-range calendar has the joint meeting scheduled for October 30, 2018. He provided a summary of the direction from the City Manager's Office on the process - the intent is to meet for 45 minutes, with the full Council and the Chair or designated Commission representative.

G Braun opened general discussion on the item by asking the commission what they hoped to accomplish with a joint meeting. He suggested a couple of things, including the need to confirm and/or suggest clarification on the charge from the Council to the URAC, and clarify how broadly or narrowly the URAC should interpret the charge, including specific language on how the URAC would like to see the mission statement to read. He also suggested the discussion touch on how interested the Council is with the possible integrated vision of the city's utility services and their interest in the URAC working on that task and bringing something forward. He also touched on topic of tasks with a scope that overlaps with another commission, and how to best coordinate the work of multiple commissions.

The Commissioners also discussed the following:

- Wanting to think about possible topics and bring suggestions to future meetings.
- A wish to reaffirm or widen the scope of the Commission, look at the vision and confirm the direction of Council before work begins.
- A suggestion to approach the Council with modifications to the scope or vision, and approach them collaboratively.
- The concept of the commission working group, including the importance of identifying key elements of work overlap in other commissions and identify areas to increase coordination, to improve outcomes.

At the conclusion of the item, S Gryczko indicated that future packets would include any ideas submitted by the Commissioners for the joint meeting discussion.

B. Discuss Development of the Davis Utility Service Vision, and Appoint Subcommittee if Necessary.

G Braun began the discussion on the item by introducing a couple of ways to develop a vision for the city's utilities, and listed a few things the Commission should consider, including:

- Opportunities for cost savings or efficiencies.
- Looking for ways to achieve the city's goals utilizing what the city already provides.
- The benefits of integration.
- Examining other aspects of resilience outside of economic resilience.
- Trends in the utility industry (positive or negative).

Commission discussion on the item included the importance of incorporating climate change into the long-term visioning process, and possibly joining forces with other large-scale planning efforts (such as the Downtown Plan). The commission also discussed the following:

- The importance of developing a vision statement, to use as a tool in evaluating the work moving forward (such as in the process of selecting a consultant for the effort).
- Identifying issues as priorities.
- Recognizing long term and short term vision goals.
- The need to have significant input from staff, especially around the legal constraints and state regulations surrounding utilities, as the vision needs to be realistic and achievable.
- The 75% diversion mandate is a state requirement; however, the work to achieve the goal is passed to cities. In addition, how cities meet the mandates are up to the jurisdictions.
- The structure of the vision statements, and whether or not the statement should be a combination of broad and specific (specific statements for each utility, or one overarching statement which covers all of them), or a combination of both.

In response to a Commissioner question about integration, several types of integration of utilities were discussed, including the loose in the street (LITS) on street yard pile collection program impact on stormwater quality, the relationship between greenwaste incentives and water conservation, and the impact of trees on the city's greenwaste and LITS service.

At the close of the discussion, G Braun requested that the commissioners send thoughts and ideas to the Chair and staff liaison as they come up. The unofficial subcommittee of the Chair and Vice Chair would continue to work on the vision and offer suggestions at future meetings.

C. Discuss Alternative Approach to Loose in the Street (LITS) Yard Material Collection.

S Gryczko introduced the item, reiterating the concept originally presented by Richard Tsai, Environmental Resource Manager, at the meeting held on July 18, 2018, to approach the reduction of the LITS on street yard pile collection program as a "phased" removal, to take

place over a span of five years. Staff are requesting that the Commission review the concept of the “phase out” and recommend the consultant working on the project with the city review costs associated with the approach. Commission discussion on the item included:

- The need to know if the capitalization of the vehicles used in the program is included within the calculations or not.
- The importance of recognizing that changes in the yard waste collection program are human behavior dependent, and the longer the program operates, the harder it will be to adopt something different.
- Whether or not it is better to make the change now, rather than wait, if the ultimate goal is to discontinue the service.
- Understanding among the Commission members that there is not consensus on whether or not the program should be eliminated, and that allocating costs to the customers requesting the service is an important option to consider.
- Frustration associated with not having seen the full study, and not having the data necessary to fully evaluate the rates.
- The unique aspects of the Solid Waste Utility that make the process for reviewing the rates different from other utilities, such as water or wastewater.
- The concern that elimination of the program will not remove the other associated environmental costs, instead they would be taken up by private haulers.
- Concerns around full containerization and tree limbs/debris versus the size of existing containers.

At the close of the discussion, J Troost made a motion to include the LITS phase out as a scenario in the cost assessments performed by the city’s consultant on the Solid Waste Rate study, to be brought back to the commission at the next meeting. This motion also assumes that the capital investment needs for the LITS program are understood, and that the program would be phased out prior to a need for more capital investment. The motion was seconded by J Franco and passed as follows:

Ayes: Braun, Bystrom, Franco, McCann, Roberts-Musser, Troost

Noes:

Absent: Kristov

After the vote, S Gryczko stated that city staff have looked at a large number of scenarios in the review of the cost of service for the LITS program. Scenarios have been narrowed down during the public discussion - but most options have been reviewed and/or considered. There was additional discussion around how to estimate a cost for an on-call yard pile collection service, and other options for service. S Gryczko replied that staff would compile a chart with the options for LITS yard pile collection service with cost estimates where possible, and give detail about challenges.

D. Schedule Special Meeting Related to Solid Waste Rate Study.

S Gryczko outlined the need of city staff to obtain more information to cost out the scenarios before the study could return to the Commission for review. He suggested the Commission set up a special meeting. After a discussion, the Commissioners determined that September 10, 2018 would be the date of the special meeting, with a time and location to be determined.

E. Review and Renew Subcommittee on Enterprise Fund Reserve Policies.

After a brief introduction to the item, E Roberts-Musser moved, seconded by J Franco, to reaffirm and renew the work of the Enterprise Fund Reserve Policies Subcommittee. The motion passed as follows:

Ayes: Braun, Bystrom, Franco, McCann, Roberts-Musser, Troost

Noes:

Absent: Kristov

7. Commission and Staff Communication

A. Long Range Calendar.

No specific changes to the Long-Range calendar were discussed during this item, other than one minor change to remove the action item on the Davis Utility Services Long-term Strategy on September 19, 2018, pending further discussion.

8. Adjourn

J Troost made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by R McCann. The motion passed by the following votes and adjourned at 8:26pm:

Ayes: Braun, Bystrom, Franco, McCann, Roberts-Musser, Troost

Noes:

Absent: Kristov